

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4402

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
H-329, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
H-148, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2013

Dear Leader Cantor and Representative Hoyer:

Last week, many of my constituents expressed concerns about the significant issues facing Congress and the need for bipartisan commitment to focus on the tasks at hand with a seriousness of purpose. Like all Americans, the men and women of Utah's Fourth District are aware of the challenges our country faces and believe it is wrong that Congress was not in Washington "at work" during the week preceding the sequester. They find "business as usual" in Congress troubling during these extraordinary times and have asked that I help to find solutions to the problem.

Specifically, my constituents said they want to see Congress devoting as much time as is needed to solve problems like finding an alternative to sequestration, identifying and passing spending cuts, setting in place a real, long-term plan for a balanced budget, moving forward with comprehensive tax reform, and addressing the need to avert looming regulatory "train wrecks." Moreover, they expect that we work toward these solutions every day, starting now.

My constituents know that these are big tasks that will require great effort, and they expressed frustration that the current congressional calendar does not reflect a schedule that allows this kind of legislation to be developed. They are hard working and make personal sacrifices of time and energy to address the critical tasks before them. They rightfully expect the same from their elected officials.

I certainly appreciate your efforts to date to provide more certainty in the congressional schedule and to place value on work both in Washington and in our districts. I applaud your decisions in the Washington schedule to provide different times for committee work and floor votes, maximizing the opportunities for members to participate in both activities. As a member from the West, I also understand the thought behind accommodating members with longer distances to travel home.

However well intended these policies, I agree with my constituents that these are extraordinary times and the issues before us are of real magnitude. They require our immediate and undivided attention.

As we know well, the democratic process is one that requires active participation to succeed. With that in mind, I respectfully suggest that you consider amending the congressional calendar to reflect a 5 day workweek with no district work periods until Congress as a whole resolves pressing budget and spending issues. This change puts congressional efforts more in line with those of our hardworking constituents. Further, it will allow time to produce viable legislation that will garner bipartisan, bicameral support.

As you know, there are many challenges before this body, and I believe Congress needs to rise to the occasion. I stand willing to work diligently with both of you, and members of either party, who are committed to solving problems and achieving progress for our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Matheson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jim Matheson